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Letter dated 29 August 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 8 August 2002 addressed to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, from His Excellency Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibrahim M. **Kamara**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 29 August 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Letter dated 8 August 2002 from the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the Secretary-General

You will recall that in welcoming the successful presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone last May, the United Nations Security Council rightly expressed the view that the next challenge for Sierra Leone and the international community was the further consolidation of peace. In a presidential statement,[a] the Council also stated: "There is much still to do, including the extension of public services to make real the restoration of government authority throughout the country, the further enhancement of the operational effectiveness of the security sector, and the effective reintegration of all ex-combatants".

In your statement at the recent Security Council workshop on the situation in Africa,[b] with special focus on the latest developments in the Mano River subregion, you yourself observed that we were now at a critical juncture. As you correctly described it, a new phase of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) operation is about to begin, while at the same time, the escalating conflict in Liberia is threatening to destabilize the entire area once again.

My Government continues to have confidence in your periodic assessment of the situation in Sierra Leone and the subregion as a whole, as well as in your ability to provide the Security Council with realistic and implementable recommendations that promote the search for lasting peace and security. I have no doubt whatsoever that your plan for the new phase of UNAMSIL's functions will be designed and implemented with the same objective.

Next month, I plan to address the General Assembly, approximately two weeks before the current mandate of UNAMSIL expires, and about the time you submit your next report to the Security Council.

Therefore, I thought I should share with you my thinking on the manner of accomplishing our common objectives for my country so eloquently articulated by the President of the Security Council and your good self. In my view, this process should be linked to the following:

(a) The ongoing restructuring of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces and other security institutions in the country;

(b) The completion of reorganization, training and equipping the police with the objective of bringing the current grossly inadequate number to at least the pre-war level;

(c) The ability of these forces and institutions to perform their respective functions more effectively throughout the territory of Sierra Leone;

(d) The status of, and prospects for, integrating all ex-combatants, taking into account that lack of progress in this regard could lead to frustrations that could also threaten the maintenance of law and order and the consolidation of peace;

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[a] S/PRST/2002/14.

[b] See S/PV.4577, p. 3.

(e) The need for reliable security during the proceedings of the Special Court;

(f) The plans now under way for decentralization and the delegation of certain governmental authority to elected local governments;

(g) The conflict and fragile political and security situation in Liberia and its repercussions for peace and stability in the Mano River subregion, not forgetting (i) that the 10-year rebel war in Sierra Leone was launched from the territory of Liberia; and (ii) that the former field commander of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Sam Bockarie, is still in Liberia;

(h) The pending definitive response to the Security Council's request that the Secretary-General consider what support the international community, and in particular the United Nations, might provide to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to ensure security on the borders shared by Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone;

(i) The fact that general elections in Liberia are less than a year away, and that at the moment there is no military presence of the United Nations in Liberia; and

(j) That there is as yet no discernible plan for possible United Nations involvement in the crucial preparatory process for free, credible and inclusive elections in Liberia.

Regarding (a) and (b) above, I should mention the concern that the Government of Sierra Leone has always had regarding a premature withdrawal of international peacekeepers from the country. For instance, our reaction to the insistence by RUF that the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) withdraw from Sierra Leone following the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement, was the provision in article XIII, paragraph 3, of the Agreement, which states:

> "The Parties agree to develop a timetable for the phased withdrawal of ECOMOG, including measures for securing all of the territory of Sierra Leone by the restructured armed forces. The phased withdrawal of ECOMOG will be linked to the phased creation and deployment of the restructured armed forces."

In this connection, we remember with deep regret the events that followed the premature withdrawal of ECOMOG from Sierra Leone before the deployment of an adequate number of UNAMSIL contingents.

I have no views on the manner or rate of the phased, gradual and cautious withdrawal of UNAMSIL, a matter which I am confident is engaging your serious consideration, particularly in light of the heavy investment of the United Nations and the need to ensure a lasting result therefrom. However, you may wish to consider the possibility of commencing implementation of the timetable for the phased withdrawal not earlier than *three months* from the date of the extension of the current mandate of UNAMSIL.

I look forward to seeing you in September.

(*Signed*) Alhaji Ahmad Tejan **Kabbah**
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone